

Anonymity versus Confidentiality

The OIG relies on concerned DOI employees and citizens to provide us with information regarding alleged waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in DOI. We realize that you may wish to remain anonymous in submitting an allegation. Your information, however, is most useful if we can contact you by telephone or mail for additional details, or in some cases, if we can interview you personally.

Anonymity

Individuals who contact the OIG Hotline via telephone or letter are not required to identify themselves to the Hotline operator. Although you may remain anonymous as a Hotline caller, we encourage you to provide us with your contact information. The ability to gather additional information from Hotline callers is important to effectively pursue allegations in the event that additional questions arise as the OIG evaluates allegations. Allegations with limited specificity or merit may be held in abeyance until more details are reported.

Confidentiality

The OIG will protect the identity of complainants to the maximum extent possible by law. Confidentiality is established by [Section 7\(b\) of the Inspector General Act of 1978](#), which precludes the Inspector General from disclosing the identity of a DOI employee who reports an allegation or provides information without the employee's consent, unless the OIG determines that disclosure is unavoidable during the course of the investigation. Non-DOI employees who report allegations may specifically request confidentiality.

Privacy Act Notice

Our authority to request information concerning fraud, waste, and abuse in connection with the programs and operations of the DOI is found in the [Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 3, sec. 4](#). The OIG uses submitted information for investigations or audits into fraud, waste, and abuse in connection with the programs and operations of DOI. We may make disclosures of submitted information to other Federal and State Government law enforcement agencies as necessary to complete our investigation, or as required under Federal law. The OIG may refer your allegation to the appropriate law enforcement agency if we believe that you have alleged a criminal or civil violation properly within their jurisdiction. We may also refer your allegation to DOI if we believe that it can be addressed through administrative means.

Whistleblower Protection Act

A whistleblower is an individual that believes that his or her organization is engaged in or willfully permits unethical, unlawful, or otherwise reprehensible activities. Whistleblowers report these activities internally in an attempt to affect change, and they may report these activities to external authorities. The OIG protects whistleblowers against retaliation under the [Whistleblower Protection Act](#).

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